



Can I Install a Solar Project on Lands Owned by Public Water Systems for Water Supply Protection?

In response to interest from municipalities statewide, MassDEP developed a new guidance document that articulates how public water systems (PWS) can seek approval for the installation and operation of small solar projects on lands that they own to protect public drinking water wells and reservoirs.

In order to protect our drinking water, MassDEP must approve all uses of PWS lands to ensure that the uses are protective of public drinking water. Many proposed PWS solar and wind projects are located in the Zone I area, the most protective water supply area. For projects within the Zone I, the suppliers must demonstrate that the energy generated by the facility will be used to benefit, either by direct consumption or by other means, the operation of the public water system.

The purpose of this new guidance is to protect public health while encouraging the use of clean energy technologies. According as stated in our guidance, MassDEP will approve wind and solar projects on PWS lands in fewer than 30 days if the water supplier submits written certification to MassDEP that protective measures, consistent with the new guidance, will be implemented during and after the project. In it's this certification, the supplier must documents that the wind or solar project will not have an adverse impact on the water supply now or in the future.

Additional Information

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For further information, see:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/laws/numeric/1101.pdf> and
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/regulations/wind-and-solar-energy-project-on-public-water-supply-land.html> for the Energy Project Guidance.

Or use this friendly link to find out who to call in your town: <http://mass.gov/dep/muni-call>